

## A NEW SPECIES OF GIANT TORTOISE.

BY THE HON. WALTER ROTHSCHILD, PH.D.

*Testudo goufféi*.

THIS tortoise is at once distinguishable from *gigantea* and its subspecies, *daudini* and *soumeirei*, which form this group of the genus *Testudo*, by its much more elevated carapace, which is also more declivous in front, much larger scutes, and squarer front edge to the carapace.

But the most prominent and easily perceived distinctive character is the development of the scutes on the forelegs and hind part of head. On the legs the scutes are raised and protrude separately, almost as prominently as in *T. calcarata* of Abyssinia. On the head the scutes, instead of being sunk in the skin, stand out like flattened knobs. These characters were even more apparent when the animal was alive. There is a double nuchal plate. Caudal and marginal plates behind somewhat recurved, thus approaching those of *T. daudini*.

Skull considerably smaller than in an individual of *T. gigantea* of similar size. Central alveola on ridges of upper jaw much closer at the front of jaw, 12 mm. apart, as opposed to 15 mm. The front margin of intermaxillaries does not project as far as in *T. gigantea*, so that the nasal opening does not slope so obliquely. Palatal region less concave than in *gigantea*, and the central ridge more pronounced. Edges of pterygoid much contracted posteriorly, while in *T. gigantea* they run almost parallel. The inner edges of the alveolar surface do not meet at the anterior extremity of the vomer, and form a short broad isosceles triangle between that and the foramina palatina, while in *T. gigantea* these edges meet and form a long narrow triangle. In this new species the basi-occipital is much raised above the ex-occipital owing to the deep concavity of the latter, while in *T. gigantea* it is almost in the same plane. The posterior lateral portions of the pterygoid which join the quadrate are strongly concave, and sunk much below the posterior portion of the sharp edge of the pterygoid, while in *T. gigantea* these portions are almost flat, and are level with the sharp edge of the pterygoid.

*Skull:*

Greatest width,	<i>T. goufféi</i> :	$4\frac{1}{2}$ inches = 114 mm.
" "	<i>T. gigantea</i> :	$4\frac{1}{2}$ inches = 114 mm.
Length to end of basi-occipital,	<i>T. goufféi</i> :	$5\frac{1}{2}$ inches = 140 mm.
" "	" "	<i>T. gigantea</i> :
		$6\frac{1}{4}$ inches = 158 mm.
Lower jaw length,	<i>T. goufféi</i> :	$3\frac{3}{4}$ inches = 96 mm.
		$4\frac{1}{8}$ inches = 103 mm.
" "	<i>T. gigantea</i> :	$4\frac{1}{8}$ inches = 104 mm.
		4 inches = 102 mm.

*Scutes:*

1st vertebral	10	$\times$	$12\frac{1}{2}$ inches = 253	$\times$	318 mm.
2nd "	$9\frac{1}{2}$	$\times$	$15\frac{1}{2}$ "	=	240 $\times$ 394 "
1st costal	14	$\times$	$13\frac{1}{2}$ "	=	351 $\times$ 343 "
Supra-caudal	11	$\times$	13 "	=	279 $\times$ 330 "
Caudal	5	$\times$	10 "	=	127 $\times$ 253 "

*Carapace :*

Length over curve, 62 inches = 1550 mm.

„ in straight line, 49½ inches = 1238 mm.

Breadth over curve, 60 inches = 1500 mm.

*Hab.* Therese Island, St. Anne's Channel, Seychelles Islands.

The carapace of the *T. gigantea* used for comparison measured 49 inches in a straight line, = 1225 mm. It is true *T. gigantea* of Schweiger, of which *T. hololissa* Günther is a synonym. This form inhabited the smallest of the three Aldabra islands, while *T. gigantea elephantina* inhabited the northern large island, and *T. daudini* is still found on the southern large island. *T. soumeirei* inhabited one of the smaller islands either of the Seychelles or neighbouring groups.

## ADDITIONAL NOTES ON BIRDS FROM N.W. AUSTRALIA.

By ERNST HARTERT, Ph.D.

(Plate 1.)

### *Amytornis woodwardi* Hart.

(Plate I. fig. 1, ♂ ad.)

IN *Nov. Zool.* 1905, p. 225, I mentioned a series of a bird under the name *Amytornis housei*. Mr. Bernard Woodward, curator of the Perth Museum, has now kindly sent me a specimen of the true *A. housei*, and I find it quite distinct from our series. I therefore described the birds from the Alligator River, Arnhem Land, under the name of *Amytornis woodwardi*, in honour of Mr. Woodward (*Bull. B. O. Club* xvi. p. 30, November 1905). In *Amyt. housei*, originally described as *Amytis housei* (Rep. Kimberley Exped., App. B, 1902) the tail is much shorter (in the specimen before me 91 mm., against 106 to 114 in *A. woodwardi*), the throat is striated with black and white, each feather being white with black margins, the malar region similarly marked, the chest, breast and abdomen are light chestnut, the former only being slightly marked with buff shaft-lines, the vent and under tail-coverts blackish with rufous shafts, and the upper wing-coverts chestnut with whitish shaft-lines. In other respects *A. housei* is much like *A. woodwardi* (cf. *Bull. B. O. Club* xvi. pp. 30, 31).

*Amytis housei* is well figured on Pl. XIII, *Emu* iv.

The generic name of these peculiar little birds has been rather unlucky. They were named *Amytis* by Lesson in 1831, but as this name had been preoccupied by Savigny in 1826 for a genus of worms, Stejneger in 1885 created the name *Amytornis*, which fact being overlooked by Oberholser, this author made another substitute for *Amytis*, namely *Diaphorillas*, in 1899.

In 1901 Mr. Milligan described a new species under the name *gigantura*. This name was changed first for *megalura* and then for *megalurus* by Sharpe (*Zoological Record* for 1901, p. 68, and *Hand-list* iv. p. 246) under the belief that *gigantura* was a "vox hybrida." Fortunately, however, the original name is composed of two genuine pure Greek words, and "*megalura*" as well as "*megalurus*" are therefore under any circumstances useless synonyms. The fear of Mr. Milligan (cf. *Victorian Naturalist* xx. p. 138) that Dr. Sharpe "forestalled" him with his name *megalurus* is of course unfounded!